NEWS

Biden admin admits it tells Facebook what to censor: ‘They’re killing people’

'We're flagging problematic posts for Facebook that spread disinformation.'

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White House Press Secretary Jen PsakiTwitter / screenshot

By Calvin Freiburger

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WASHINGTON, D.C., July 19, 2021 (LifeSiteNews) – White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki admitted Thursday that the Biden administration has been telling Facebook what posts it wants taken down, inadvertently giving potentially significant ammunition to a legal recourse for online censorship that conservatives only recently began exploring.

The *Daily Caller* reports that during Thursday's press conference Psaki called on Facebook to release "data on the reach of COVID-19 vaccine misinformation," to "create a robust enforcement strategy that bridges their properties and provides transparency about the rules," take "faster action against harmful posts," and promote "quality information sources in their feed algorithm."

But the most eyebrow-raising portion of her remarks was her confirmation that "we're flagging problematic posts for Facebook that spread disinformation." Facebook declined the *Caller's* request for comment on the revelation.

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Psaki doubled down the next day, declaring that anyone banned on one platform for spreading medical "misinformation" (which in practice simply means dissenting from the official positions of federal health agencies) should be banned on other social networks as well:

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President Joe Biden weighed in himself later Friday, stating bluntly that his message for Facebook is that “they’re killing people”:

(Click to view video)

“The only pandemic we have is among the unvaccinated,” claimed Biden, and then repeated, “they’re killing people.” The U.S. government stopped counting “breakthrough COVID” cases – cases of infection in a person who is considered “fully vaccinated” against the coronavirus – when the numbers exceeded 10,000 and the deaths among the fully vaccinated from COVID-19 hit 535.

The revelation that the federal government is actively encouraging private entities to suppress speech has deeply alarmed many conservatives and some libertarians, while others have noted that Psaki’s comments may actually create new challenges for Facebook in its impending legal battle with former President Donald Trump.

Earlier this month, Trump announced he would be the lead plaintiff in a class-action lawsuit against Facebook, Google, and Twitter, seeking the restoration of his and other social media accounts plus punitive damages. Among his arguments will be that Big Tech has effectively been “illegally deputized as the censorship arm of the U.S. government” (the conservative legal nonprofit Center for American Liberty is currently suing Twitter on similar grounds, for collusion with the state of California).

On July 11, author Vivek Ramaswamy argued in the *Wall Street Journal* that this argument has a sound basis in Supreme Court precedent that government “may not induce, encourage, or promote private persons to accomplish what it is constitutionally forbidden to accomplish” (*Norwood v. Harrison*, 1973), and that state-issued immunity (such as the controversial Section 230), threats of prosecution or “adverse regulatory action,” “willful participa[tion] in joint activity,” or even just “significant encouragement” can suffice to turn private censorship decisions into the functional equivalent of state action.

On Thursday morning, UCLA law professor and prominent libertarian Eugene Volokh wrote that while the claim could theoretically survive, he considered it a “long shot” because it was “unlikely that Trump can provide” enough “powerful evidence of government coercion” to prove it.

But Psaki’s latest comments may have gone a long way toward providing that evidence.